

REMARKS

This responds to the restriction requirement dated August 6, 2003. Applicants request reconsideration of the restriction requirement.

The Examiner has required restriction of the claims into four groups. Applicants provisionally elect Group II (claims 132-148). However, applicants traverse the restriction requirement on the following bases. First, the Examiner asserted that "invention III has separate utility such as an expert system for routing a question to a second expert chosen by a first expert referring a question posed." However, in order for the first expert to refer a question posed, the question had to be posed to the first expert. Thus, the example set forth by the Examiner of a separate system has to include a first expert receiving a question. A first expert receiving a question is recited in each independent claim in the application. Therefore, the example provided by the Examiner is not a separate system but a species of the genus of an expert system in which a question is posed to an expert. Applicants therefore respectfully assert that the restriction requirement is improper and should be withdrawn so that each of the pending claims are considered in further prosecution of this application.

Second, the Examiner identified the following classes and subclasses for the claim groupings:

Group I in class 705, subclass 9 – class 705, Data Processing: Financial Business Practice, Management or Cost/Price Determination and subclass 9, Automated

Electrical Financial or Business Practice or Management Arrangement, Staff Scheduling or Staff Assignment.

Group II in class 706, subclass 47 – class, 706 Data Processing: Artificial Intelligence, subclass 47, Knowledge Processing System, Ruled Based Reasoning System.

Group III in class 705, subclass 26 – class 705, Data Processing: Financial Business Practice, Management or Cost/Price Determination and subclass 26 Automated Electrical Financial or Business Practice or Management Arrangement, Electronic Shopping (e.g., Remote Ordering).

Group IV in class 705, subclass 9 - class 705, Data Processing: Financial Business Practice, Management or Cost/Price Determination and subclass 9, Automated Electrical Financial or Business Practice or Management Arrangement, Staff Scheduling or Staff Assignment.

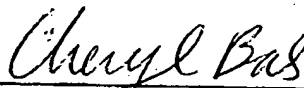
Each of the pending claims relates to an expert system where experts respond to questions posed by users. The relevant classes and subclasses are so broad as to encompass the subject matter of any of the claims in any of the groups. In addition, to the extent the identified class/subclass designations are relevant to any claim in the pending application, they are relevant to each of the claims. As a result, the search and examination of the entire application without restriction to any of the groups can be made without serious burden even if the Examiner maintains that the application includes claims to independent or distinct inventions. Accordingly, as per M.P.E.P. 803.01, the Examiner must examine each claim on

the merits. Applicants respectfully assert that the restriction requirement is improper and should be withdrawn.

Since Applicants have provisionally elected a claim grouping and has traversed the restriction requirement, Applicants respectfully request that prosecution of this application include each one of the pending claims. Should there remain any unanswered questions, the Examiner is requested to call the Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Dated: September 8, 2003

Respectfully submitted,



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